

A Systematic Review of Rajasthan's Rural Youth Challenges and Pathway to Positive Youth Development



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Abstract

Rural youth make up a significant portion of India's demographic dividend, their overall development is hampered by a number of socioeconomic and developmental issues. With an emphasis on major issues and the promise of Positive Youth Development (PYD) as a transformative paradigm, this study offers a thorough evaluation of the literature on rural youth in Rajasthan. To guarantee an open and thorough selection of research, the review adheres to the PRISMA principles. A thorough search of key academic databases and institutional sources was conducted for literature published between 1990 and 2025. 82 studies that satisfied the inclusion and exclusion criteria were included in the final analysis out of the 380 records that were found. The result shows that rural youth in Rajasthan face ongoing difficulties include poor access to high-quality education, high dropout rates, unemployment, early marriage, poor knowledge of reproductive health, substance abuse, and exposure to violence. The majority of current government programs are sector-specific and welfare-oriented, and they frequently lack integration and significant young involvement. The PYD framework, on the other hand, encourages a strength-based and all-encompassing approach, focusing on the growth of youth's competence, confidence, connection, character, and compassion. The study emphasises the necessity for context-sensitive, community-driven, and evidence-based interventions while highlighting the limited use of PYD in the Indian setting. It concludes that resolving the issues facing rural youth and promoting sustainable development in Rajasthan can be greatly aided by using PYD methods.

Keywords: Rural Youth, Youth Challenges, Rajasthan, Positive Youth Development

Introduction

Youth has been a buzz word that has fascinated the minds of the intelligentsia for a long time. The question of youth and youth development have the same relevance in the contemporary world as it had been in the days of the past. Now the question arises here, who is a YOUTH? "Youth is the period when people begin to be heard and recognized outside their families. They establish their identities as individuals while they begin to interact independently with the broader commu-

nity" (The World Bank, 2007, P. 9). While there are no universally accepted definitions of youth, the United Nations, "for statistical purposes, defines 'youth' as a person between the age group of 15 to 24 years" (UNDESA, 2014, P. 1). In the Indian National Youth Policy (NYP)-2003, "youth was defined a person of age between 13-35 years, but in the NYP-2014, the youth age-group is defined as 15-29 years with a view to having more focused approach, as far as various policy interventions are concerned" (Ministry of Youth

Affairs & Sports, 2014, P. 9). It is the transitional phase of life. During this period the person leaves childhood and enters adulthood. The changes such as physiological, physical, psychological and behavioral occur with significant stress. This stress influences and affects their relationship with peers and adults.

Youths are the asset of any nation. They are valuable human resources in every nation. "A population bulge in the working age groups, however large the total population, is seen as an inevitable advantage characterized as a demographic dividend" (Babu & Kavita, 2015, P. 39). Therefore "India which is beginning to be characterized by such a bulge is seen as an advantage, despite its large population. It has provided one more "macroeconomic" argument to those who see India emerging as a regional (or even global) power soon, possibly also displacing China as a potential world leader" (Chandrasekha et al., 2006, P. 5055). The challenge with such huge 'Youth Bulge' is to channelize the energy into the positive and creative development process, and this 'demographic dividend' offers an excellent opportunity to India (MOYAS, 2014).

Today's rural youth is restless, hopeless, misguided and marginalized. They are considered as the most deprived group. Often, they have limited access to educational initiatives that are made to meet their circumstances and requirements. Not surprisingly, many rural youths drop school without completing their primary education. Reason being, lack of good schools in remote areas, inadequate infrastructure facilities in rural areas, the school are few, and far away from the target population, no commuting facilities and the qualified teacher are reluctant to move outside the city area (UNDESA, 2007). "Educational disparities between rural and urban areas are far greater in less developed Asian countries such as Cambodia, India and Sri Lanka than in more developed countries such as Japan and the Republic of Korea" (Ibid., Pp. 17, 18). The academic performance of urban youth is higher than rural youth, especially in science and mathematics, ICT education and foreign language studies (Ibid).

For many rural youths, personal conditions prevent them from maintaining sustained commitment towards studies. Irregular income and sustainability of the rural families also prevent their youth from schooling. During harvest, youth are expected to work in the fields or to take care of siblings. In times of natural calamity, families are forced to take their children out of school. Youth who are not adequately educated end up with limited job opportunities, poor livelihood, and remains unskilful for the entire life (Ibid).

Therefore, to address the above concerns, Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an appropriate approach to provide the template for building successful and active rural youth. It views the young generation as invaluable assets to their families, their communities, society, and country at large. It further proposes that when necessary resources or skill building programs are provided to the young generation to enhance their inbuilt abilities such as competence, confidence, connection and caring members of the community with good character, than they can reduce risk behaviors and become the agents of social transformation and social contributors towards their family, community, and society.

Rationale

The youth of rural Rajasthan become adults quickly, mainly because the transition from adolescent to adult usually occurs at an early age. The same is true for poor young rural women regarding marriage and childbearing. Lack of alternatives is the primary perceived reason behind the high incidence of early marriage and procreation among rural young girls. Rural survival strategies demand that young people must fully contribute to meet the livelihood needs of their household from old age. Low literacy rate, unemployment among the educated youth, crisis of ideology, lack of proper guidance, loss of moral caliber and personal integrity, interested in acquisition of power, school dropouts child marriage & teenage pregnancy, violence, high-risk sexual behavior, and wealth, prone to violence or rowdiness, lack of access to organizations and services meant for youth, waste of time and energy in delinquent activities are some of the significant

problems faced by the rural youth. Consequently, positive development barely exists for most of the rural youth in Rajasthan.

Objectives

The objectives of this paper are: (1) to study the Rajasthan's Rural Youth development challenges; (2) What is Youth Development? (3) To examine the Indian Government Initiatives for Rural Youth Development; (4) to understand the concept of Positive Youth Development; (5) to examine the available literature on process and outcome of PYD interventions.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in Positive Youth Development (PYD), which stresses a strength-based approach to youth by emphasizing their abilities rather than their shortcomings. It mainly draws from the Five Cs Model, which emphasizes competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring as essential for holistic youth development; the Ecological Systems Theory, which places youth development within larger social, economic, and cultural contexts; and the Developmental Assets Framework, which explains the interaction between internal and external assets. All these perspectives provide aid in the analysis of how rural context affects youth outcomes in Rajasthan.

Conceptual Framework

The study conceptualized that institutional support, developmental processes, and structural obstacles combine together shape rural youth development. Structural challenges include gender inequality, unemployment, poverty, and low levels of education. PYD constructs include competence, self-assurance, connection, character, and compassion. Government programs include initiatives for youth participation, livelihood, and skill development. These factors work together to support PYD processes, which assist young people in overcoming structural obstacles and achieving favourable results including increased employability, social engagement, and empowerment.

Methodology

This paper used a systematic review process that is guided by the PRISMA framework to ensure transparency, rigor and reprehensibility in the selection of literature related to Rajasthan youth,

rural youth, plans and policies for rural youths and PYD perspective. To gather useful and policy-focused insights on rural youth development in India, grey literature—such as policy documents, government reports, institutional publications, and program guidelines—was added to peer-reviewed literature.

A comprehensive literature search was carried out covering the period of 1990 to 2025 in several search engines viz. Economic & Political Weekly, Google Scholar, JStor, PubMed, Sage Journals, Academic.edu, Elsevier, Scrib, Taylor & Francis, Research Gate, PsycINFO, and books & journals related to youth development. Various keywords were used such as youth, rural youth, young people, adolescent, PYD, PYD programs or project, and India. Articles were selected if they satisfy the following criteria:

Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

Studies related to the (a) youth and youth development; (b) addressing youth risk behavior and other challenges and promoting positive development approach; (c) programs used in the Asian context; and (d) programs using rigorous evaluative techniques emphasizing more on true experimental design or quasi-experimental designs. Studies that were excluded: (a) not related to the youth development; (b) related to urban youth and do not include rural youth; (c) lack conceptual or empirical relevance; (d) duplicate records; and (e) inaccessible full texts.

Selection Process

Selection Process is presented through the diagram No. 1

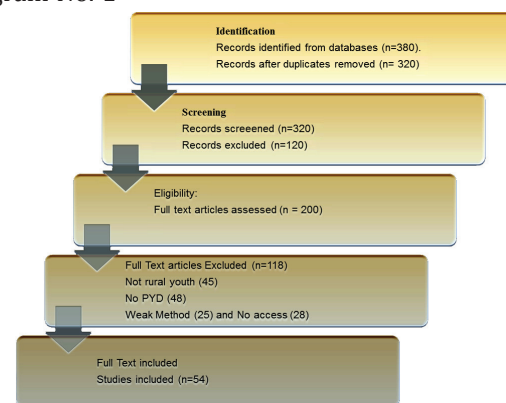


Fig. 1

Rajasthan's Rural Youth Challenges

Population: According to the 2011 Census, youth in Rajasthan between the age group of 15-24 years is 13,741,000 with a decadal population growth of 34.2%. The sex ratio between the age group of 15-24 years is 891 per 1000 males.

Education: In India, "10-16% of young men and 38-51% of young women from the northern states had never been to school, compared to 2-8% and 5-21%, respectively, in Maharashtra and the southern states. The rates were particularly low among several sub-groups of youth young women, married youth, rural youth, those belonging to poor households, Muslim youth and those belonging to scheduled castes and tribes" (IIPS & PC, 2010). As per Rajasthan state documents, the major concern which has come up is the lack of education amenities for the young generation (Department of Finance and Planning, Rajasthan, 2008; Department of Education, Rajasthan, n.d.). The education level of youth from Rajasthan is lower as compared to entire India and similar in the case of gender enrolment in the educational institution. The youth literacy rate is 91% of men and 71% of women (Census, 2011). The Gender Parity Index at "primary (0.87), upper primary (0.83), elementary (0.86), secondary (0.74) and higher secondary level (0.69) in 2015-16, considerably lower than the national average" (NEUPA, 2015, P. 38).

NFHS-3 survey data of Rajasthan depicted that "80% of primary-school-age children (6-10 years) attend school (87% in urban areas and 78% in rural areas). School attendance drops to 69% for children age 11-14 years and is only 38% for youths age 15-17 years" (IIPS, 2007, P. 3). The gender disparity in school attendance is prevalent in rural areas in comparison to urban areas. E.g. "15-17 years, school attendance is 51% for boys but only 23% for girls" (Ibid., P. 4).

However, as per NFHS-4 survey data of Rajasthan revealed much improvement in the education sector. "84% of primary-school-age children (6-17 years) attend school (87% in urban areas and 83% in rural areas). School attendance drops to 90% for children age 11-14 years and is only 71%

for children age 15-17 years. Gender disparity is more in 15-17 years (63% of girls and 78% of boys) in comparison to 6-14 years (87% of girls and 93% of boys)" (IIPS, 2017, P. 4). Further, it is also revealed from NFHS-4 survey that "57% of women age 15-49 years and 85% of men age 15-49 years are literate" (Ibid, P. 4). But out of this educated population only "16% of women" have passed twelve or more years of school in comparison to "29% of men" (Ibid).

Dropout Rates: The STs in Rajasthan are the worst affected in cases of school dropouts. The annual average dropout rate at the primary level for Rajasthan was "8.39% while for ST communities were at 10.04%" (Rana & Premi, 2017, P. 59). Similarly, for the upper primary level, ST communities were at "7% in comparison to the state average of 6.03%" (Ibid., P. 59). They have even the lowest transition rate of "86.38% from primary to upper primary level and 69.23% for secondary to the higher secondary level of education in comparison to the state's average of 92.02% and 74.34%" (Ibid., P. 59).

Employment: Rajasthan as a state provides few jobs opening for young people as compared to other parts of the country, unemployment, and underemployment is on higher side among youths in comparison to the general population. According to NSS 68th round, "among the population aged 15 and above, unemployment rates, as measured in terms of the usual principal status, were 32 and 42 among young men in rural and urban settings, respectively, during 2011-12; the corresponding rates among young women were 110 and 104, respectively" (NSSO, 2014, P. 200). As per "NSSO 68th round survey, considering usual status, the unemployment rate for males was about 2% and for females was about 3% in rural areas" (MOSPI, 2017, P. 37). According to NFHS-4 survey, "only 29% of women age 15-49 were employed in the 12 months in comparison to 75% men age 15-49 years were employed" (IIPS, 2017, P. 27).

High-Risk Sexual Behavior: The sexual and reproductive health of youths in Rajasthan is highly vulnerable. It is evident that youths in Rajasthan

have an early sexual orientation within the marriage as compared to the overall youth in India. Reports from the national survey revealed that 8% of young male and 2% of a young female, respectively, between the age group of 15-24 years are involved in sexual activity with a non-regular partner (National Institute of Medical Statistics & NACO, 2008).

Available data revealed that there is limited awareness of youth in Rajasthan on the issues of sexual and reproductive health. According to NFHS-4 survey, “in the last 12 months, only 0.3% of women and 6% of men had higher risk sex. A similar kind of percent of men having higher risk sex reported in the last 12 months is 7% for urban and 6% for rural areas. 0.1% women and 1% of men had multiple sex partners” (IIPS, 2017, P. 22). Higher-risk sexual behavior among rural men has doubled, when compared with the reports of NFHS-3 survey.

Data from NFHS-3 depicts that only 33% of men and 17% of women had awareness on HIV/AIDS and 87% and 55% of men and women respectively have the understanding about condoms (IIPS, 2007). However, data from NFHS-4 shows that “only 37% of men and 19% of women have comprehensive knowledge about HIV/AIDS and 86% and 65% of men and women respectively have heard about HIV/AIDS. Only 50% of women know that consistent condom use can help prevent HIV/AIDS, compared with 79% of men” (IIPS, 2017, Pp. 24-25).

Child Marriage & Teenage Pregnancy: There is the existence of child marriage in Rajasthan. According to the report in 2005-06, “65% of women aged 20–24 was married by age 18, and 57% of men aged 25–29 was married by age 21. Moreover, about one in six 15–19 years old girls (16%) have begun childbearing” (IIPS and Macro International, 2008). Evidence from a study revealed that girls wish to marry after crossing 18 years and even many parents understand the disadvantages of early marriage but could not resist doing so due to customs and cultural norms (Santhya et al., 2006).

According to NFHS-3 survey data of Rajasthan, “young women age 15-19, 16% have already begun childbearing, the same as the national average. Women in rural areas (19%) are more than twice as likely to be mothers as young women in urban areas (8%). Overall, 2% of women age 15 are already either mothers or pregnant. By age 19, 36% of women have begun childbearing” (IIPS, 2008, P. 6). However, as per NFHS-4 survey, “childbearing has reduced from 16% to 6% for young women age 15-19 years in Rajasthan, but it has increased sharply to 9% among women age 18 and 21% among women age 19 years. Women with no education begun early childbearing in comparison to women with the education of 12 or more years” (IIPS, 2017, P. 6).

Tobacco & Alcohol Use: Around 47% of men and only 6% of women age 15-49 years use some form of tobacco. “Men are much more likely to use *gutkha* or *paan masala* with tobacco (22%), smoke *bidis* (19%) and use *khaini* (12%) than to use other types of tobacco. Among men, the use of tobacco is high in rural areas in comparison to the urban area. Men are likely to drink alcohol (16%), and almost no women drink alcohol” (IIPS, 2017, P. 24).

Violence: “Women between the age 15-49, 23% have ever experienced physical violence, and 3% have ever experienced sexual violence. Among those who experienced physical violence since age 15, the most common perpetrator for ever-married women was the husband (90%) and for never-married women, it was mother/step-mother (68%), teacher (18%), father/step-father (16%), and sister/brother (15%)” (IIPS, 2017, P. 29).

To achieve the holistic development of Rajasthan state should give due attention to the development of the rural sector. Socio-cultural and economic differences are still existing among the rural and urban people. As huge bulge of youth population resides in the rural area, their growth and development are decisive for the progress of Rajasthan state. In the view of the intensification of youth challenges in Rajasthan contexts, there is an urgent need for developing Positive Youth Development (PYD) programs.

Indian Government Initiatives for Youth Development

Youths have always been of important concern for the GOI. Many youth development programs

have been started by the GOI post-independence such as NCC, NSS, NYKS, and so on. Some of the policies and programs for youth development in India are mentioned in the Table No. 1.

Table No. 1

Initiative / Programme	Type	Brief Description
National Youth Policy (2014)	Policy	Provides a holistic framework to empower youth (15–29 years) to achieve their full potential and contribute to national development. (MOYAS, 2014)
National Young Leaders Programme (NYLP)	Programme	Aims to develop leadership qualities among youth through components like Youth Parliament, Youth for Development, and national awards.(MOYAS, 2014)
Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS)	Organization/ Programme	Focuses on rural youth development through skill-building, community participation, and nation-building activities. (NYKS, 2016)
National Service Scheme (NSS, 2016)	Programme	Encourages youth participation in community service, focusing on education, health, sanitation, and social welfare activities. (MOSPI, 2017)
Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD)	Institution	Conducts academic programs, research, and capacity-building initiatives related to youth development and policy. (RGNIYD, 2016)
National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development (NPYAD)	Scheme	Provides financial assistance for youth development activities such as leadership, personality development, and national integration. (MOYAS, 2014)
Project LIFE – MGNREGA	Programme	Links rural employment with skill development and livelihood generation for youth from MGNREGA households. (MOSPI, 2017).
Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)	Scheme	Focuses on skill development and employment generation for rural poor youth aged 15–35 years. (MOSPI, 2017)
Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana – NRLM (DAY-NRLM)	Programme	Promotes livelihood enhancement, self-employment, and women empowerment through skill training and entrepreneurship. (MOSPI, 2017)
Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)	Scheme	Supports self-employment by providing financial assistance for setting up micro-enterprises in rural and urban areas. (MOSPI, 2017)
Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)	Scheme	Provides skill training and certification to youth to enhance employability and livelihood opportunities.
National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	Policy	Aims to create a skilled workforce by promoting large-scale, quality, and sustainable skill development initiatives. (MOSDE, 2015)

Pathway to Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development (PYD)

Many western countries started to move away from a problem-prevention approach to a strength-based approach, i.e., According to Damon, "the field of PYD focuses on each child's talents, strengths, interests, and future potential in contrast to approaches that focus on problems that youth display when they grow up such as learning disabilities and substance abuse" (Damon, 2004, Pp. 13-14). Hamilton defined PYD in three ways. Firstly, youth development is often perceived as a natural process (Hamilton et al., 2004, P.3). Secondly, the context-individual bidirectional relationship in the developmental process of strength (Ibid., P. 4). Thirdly, "set of activities, which promote the developmental process of youth" (Ibid., P. 4). Larson drew the comparison between PYD and developmental psychopathology and proposed that the previous is concerned about "how things go right" and while the latter is about "how things go wrong" (Larson, 2000). PYD approach "developed during the past decade to promote a more positive vision of young adolescents" (Damon, 2004, P. 15). Lerner et al. (2005) show, "the PYD perspective is a strength-based conception of adolescence. The perspective from developmental systems theory stressed that PYD emerges when the potential plasticity of human development is aligned with developmental assets" (P. 10). Gavin also promotes that PYD may be a potential approach to promote youth health (Gavin, 2010). Kelley indicated "the need of psychology grounded in fundamental causal principles that reveal clearly how such children and adolescents can become self-motivated, socially competent, compassionate, and psychologically vigorous adults" (Kelley, 2003, P. 47).

Benson et al. (2006) showed "PYD as an emerging arena of research and practice. PYD is both rooted in the philosophical traditions of developmental psychology and fueled by newer emphases on nurturing the potentialities of youth, and on addressing and helping to shape the roles of developmental contexts, especially that of the

community, and youth themselves as agents of their development" (Pp. 894-895).

A study conducted by Roth & other scholars showed, "youth who participated in holistic positive development program showed the larger and more long-term change in positive behavior than did youth who participated in a program focused on preventing one or two behaviors" (Craig, 2011, P. 25). Larson (2000) "advised us to encourage youth to develop initiative, the effort put forth over time to achieve a goal" (P. 172). He concluded: "Initiative is fostered in youth when they are involved in structured voluntary activities" (P. 178). Larson (2006) also describes PYD "as a process in which young people's capacity for being motivated by challenge energizes their active engagement in development" (P. 677).

Several studies showed that 64% of the intervention programs tried to bring some kind systemic change which involves schools, families or community-based organization to bring up development competencies in youths. However, only 24% reported the subsequent change in targeted systems (Durlak et al., 2007). There was a dip in PYD research when top research journals were considered. "Analyses of the PYD manuscripts about population characteristics, methodology, research setting, and topical areas provide a snapshot of the trends and gaps in the body of knowledge related to youth development and have implications for future research efforts in the field" (Barcelona, 2011, P. 1).

The influences of media on development seem to be positive, in the context of youth development it appears to be slightly negative particularly in the Indian context. The behavior of Indian youth in society is widely influenced by media which reflects negative consequences for their future development. While theories of PYD speak about youth making full use of available resources, the media in India seems to be contributing to the negative growth of However, and other forms of high-risk behavior. Thus, the media in India appears to be contributing to negative youth development (Freddy, 2012). Fraser-Thomas (2005) evaluates the strengths of the youth sports pro-

gram to bring up positive development, during the reduction of risky behaviors. He also “highlights the significance of sports program built on developmental assets and appropriate setting features in bringing about the five ‘C’s of PYD” (P. 19). Overall, proponents of the model say that enhanced strength and resourcefulness among youth lead to increased participation in the community, which further contributes to PYD.

Positive Youth Development Models

Like the definition of PYD, it has no universally accepted model for PYD programs. Most researchers acknowledged that youth development has many meanings and models that consistency in every context is not possible. Some popular models are strength based which are discussed below in the Table No. 2.

Table No. 2

PYD Model	Key Features / Description	Reference(s)
40 Developmental Assets Framework	Identifies 40 internal and external assets (e.g., support, empowerment, positive values, social competencies) that promote healthy youth development and reduce risk behaviors.	Benson et al. (2006); Benson et al. (2011)
Targeting Life Skills Model (4-H Model)	Focuses on developing life skills categorized under Head, Heart, Hands, and Health, helping youth build competencies and personal development.	Heck & Subramaniam (2009)
Four Essential Elements Model	Emphasizes four core elements—Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity—as essential for positive youth growth and transition into adulthood.	Heck & Subramaniam (2009); Gambone et al. (2002)
Community Action Framework	A systemic model that links community capacity, youth opportunities, and developmental outcomes, focusing on long-term social and economic well-being.	Heck & Subramaniam (2009)
5 Cs Model	Highlights five key components—Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring—that foster holistic youth development and lead to contribution (sixth C).	Lerner et al. (2005); Lerner (2004); Phelps et al. (2009)

PYD Models and Their applicability in Rural Rajasthan

A critical examination of PYD Models and their

applicability in Rural Rajasthan context is given in the Table No. 3.

Table No. 3

PYD Model	Core Focus	Strengths in Rural Rajasthan Context	Limitations / Challenges	Applicability & Required Adaptation
40 Developmental Assets Framework	Internal & external developmental assets	Emphasizes role of family, school, and community—relevant for rural social structure	Assumes that enabling institutions are available; access is restricted by inadequate infrastructure and gender inequity.	Local institutions (youth clubs, schools) must be strengthened, and marginalised groups, especially girls, must be included.

PYD Model	Core Focus	Strengths in Rural Rajasthan Context	Limitations / Challenges	Applicability & Required Adaptation
Targeting Life Skills Model (4-H Model)	Life skills (Head, Heart, H a n d s , Health)	Enhances decision-making, leadership, and coping skills among youth	Without work and educational possibilities, skills alone are insufficient.	Should be combined with initiatives for vocational training and livelihood.
Four Essential Elements Model	Belonging, Mastery, Independence, Generosity	Aligns with community-oriented rural culture; promotes social cohesion	Gender roles, caste hierarchy, and conventional standards limit independence	Requires cultural adjustment and prioritises group development over individual liberty.
Community Action Framework	Community engagement & systemic change	Encourages local participation, community ownership, and sustainability	Youth voices, particularly those of marginalised communities, may be excluded by power hierarchies.	At the village level, inclusive government structures and youth participation mechanisms are required.
5 Cs Model	Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, Caring	Holistic framework; promotes positive identity and social responsibility	Focuses less on structural obstacles (poor, unemployment) and more on personal characteristics.	Should be paired with legislative initiatives that target gender equity, employment, and education.

A Critical observation between PYD Models and Indian Government Programs

The table No. 4 highlights a critical observation between the strength based approach of PYD

Models and welfare & target based youth development programs in India.

Table No. 4

Dimension	PYD Models	Indian Government Programs	Critical Observation	Who Has Upper Hand?
Approach	Strength-based, holistic youth development (focus on potential)	Welfare-oriented and scheme-based (focus on needs and deficits)	PYD builds internal capacities; programmes address external needs	Balanced – both needed
Focus Area	Psychological, social, and behavioral development	Employment, skills, education, livelihood	PYD lacks structural intervention; programmes lack holistic development	Govt programmes (for immediate impact)
Context Sensitivity	Developed largely in Western contexts	Designed for Indian socio-economic conditions	PYD requires adaptation; programmes are context-specific but often generic	Govt programmes

Dimension	PYD Models	Indian Government Programs	Critical Observation	Who Has Upper Hand?
Implementation	Conceptual frameworks; limited direct implementation	Large-scale implementation through ministries and schemes	PYD lacks delivery mechanisms; programmes face execution gaps	Govt programmes (in reach), but weak in quality
Youth Participation	High emphasis on youth engagement and agency	Often top-down with limited youth voice	Programmes fail to empower youth meaningfully	PYD models
Gender & Social Inclusion	Promotes inclusivity in theory	Inclusion exists but limited in practice due to social barriers	Both struggle, but PYD provides better conceptual base	PYD models
Sustainability	Focus on long-term behavioral and social outcomes	Often short-term target-driven outcomes	PYD stronger for long-term transformation	PYD models
Scalability	Limited scalability without institutional support	Highly scalable across regions	PYD lacks scale; programmes reach large populations	Govt programmes
Outcome Effectiveness	Strong in building character and life skills	Strong in providing employment and training opportunities	Neither alone is sufficient	Combined approach needed

Discussion

The review indicates that an essential part of rural youth of Rajasthan has challenges and conditions that would eventually impact their growth and development. The problem related to the youths are on the rise, and likely to increase in the coming years. There is a necessity to develop excellent and qualitative programs for the welfare of youth in India. Most of the policies & programs related to youth development have focused on the following domains: (a) education; (b) welfare; (c) employment; (d) skill development; and (e) other related programs. There are hardly any programs which promote holistic development. PYD programs in India are almost negligible as compared to the programs in the Western scenario. There are several factors which contribute to this observable fact.

- First, the base of the PYD is fragile in Asia and India.

- Second, there is a perception amongst Indians that children and youth grow automatically with time. The attempt to promote PYD programs is inadequate because Asian and Indian do not give much priority to holistic youth development. Therefore, such cultural beliefs weaken the development of PYD programs in Asia.
- Third, in western countries the government undertakes developmental programs very seriously, the government in Asia and India do not pay much attention and spend less financial support on the same. The evidence-based implementation and policies are just at the initial phase in Asia and India.

The literature also asserted that the acceptance of a PYD approach and PYD models needs a paradigm shift from youth-related issues to youth strength-based approach. There are several aspects related to the PYD were identified:

- Focus on the holistic development of the youth.
- focus on the person-context path.
- emphasis on developmental programs for youths. Conceptually speaking, there is a necessity to rethink concerning PYD in youth development in the Indian context.

Further, the PYD perspective also purposes that the shortage of socio-cultural and economic capability could be the origin of youth risk behavior. Researchers and practitioners should contribute towards the development of PYD programs and should develop some domestic evidence-based youth development programs in the Indian context. Furthermore, there should be a systematic monitoring and evaluation system of the programs to see the success and failure of the programs. Youth researcher and practitioners must be consulted before the formation and implementation of the youth development programs. Finally, it is also essential to capture and document the success stories of the youth development programs that can be replicated with slight contextual modification.

Conclusion

As discussed in the literature, the primary task in rural youth of Rajasthan is developing a holistic or positive development which would reduce their challenges to a great extent. To fulfil this task PYD approach has full potential as it includes the development of a committed, positive identity that will help youth make a smooth transition into adulthood and cope up with situations in the future. There is an essential question to be asked to what extent PYD is applicable cross-culturally. Maximum research has been performed in the institutional and structured settings with students in the western context and very few in Asian backgrounds. The researchers identifies the gap and realizes the importance of research with diverse groups and other vital contexts like families, community and workplaces where youth spend a maximum portion of their time. A review on PYD frameworks has proposed that the 5 Cs Model of PYD is the most empirically supported

framework to date (Heck & Subramaniam, 2009). Regarding the research conducted using several models, "5 Cs model as one of the two famous models, have the most scientific usage on large samples used and longitudinal study design" (Ibid, P. 21). Empirical Evidence showed that this framework has excellent psychometric properties. Conceptually speaking, the PYD approach has the potential to mitigate the challenges faced by rural youths of Rajasthan. It would be successful when the contexts and community participation, and the youth would be at the forefront in planning and implementation of the change initiative.

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